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DEPARTMENT RELEASES CHEF-DESIGNED SCHOOL LUNCH COOKING VIDEOS

BOISE – As part of the state’s continued efforts to increase the nutrition of school meals, the Idaho State Department of Education has released a series of cooking videos to help local school districts begin making the new recipes designed by an Idaho chef.

Last year, the Department published *Chef-Designed School Lunch*, a book of recipes specifically designed for Idaho schools by Chef Brenda Thompson, with the help of state dietitians and feedback from Idaho students. Since then, Chef Brenda has recorded cooking demonstrations to show foodservice directors and kitchen staff in Idaho’s schools how to prepare all ten meals featured in the book.

“This project has supported Idaho school foodservice directors toward serving a greater variety of healthful, high-quality tasting meals that Idaho kids love,” said Dr. Colleen Fillmore, Director of Child Nutrition Programs at the Idaho State Department of Education.

Each cooking demonstration ranges from 10 to 25 minutes long. The demonstrations include: Cheeseburger Salad Wrap, BBQ Roasted Chicken, Thai Chicken and Basil Barley, Fish Tacos, Volcanic Meatloaf, Southwest Burrito, Mozzarella Crusted Pollock, Mandarin Chicken Rice Bowl, Cilantro Pork Salad Wrap and a Breakfast Burrito.

This project began in 2012 when the Department partnered with Liberty Charter School in Nampa to host “Chef Tuesdays,” where Chef Brenda worked with the local foodservice staff to serve new, more nutritious lunch recipes and taste-test each meal with actual students. Based on their feedback, Chef Brenda crafted healthy recipes that received the thumbs up from students. These recipes are now available for every school in Idaho to replicate and serve in their cafeteria, if they choose.

Funding for the Chef Tuesdays project, the *Chef-Designed School Lunch* book and production of the cooking demonstration videos was provided as part of a federal grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child Nutrition Programs.

The meals and recipes found in the Department’s new recipe book and cooking demonstration videos are designed to:

- Utilize a wide variety of available USDA foods;
- Meet the USDA’s more nutritious Meal Pattern standards for Grades K-8 and 9-12;
- Appeal to students’ preferences and tastes while incorporating a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, and low-fat dairy foods; and
- Minimize food costs for Idaho schools by providing a two-week cycle menu that utilizes four to nine different USDA Foods per meal.

To download the cooking demonstrations or to read the chef-inspired-recipes for school meals, visit
<http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/cnp/chef/>.

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